# Don Bosco Insights

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**In This Issue:** Don Bosco YLC; Fr. Dave Sajdak, SDB; Fr. Adaikala Raja John, SDB; National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians; St. John Bosco-St. James Parish; Salesian Provincial Archives; Jesse Hilario, Salesian Lay Missioner (SLM); Bro. Alfred Flatoff, SDB; and Ann Jeriha



Fr. Bill Bucciferro, SDB, is ordained a Salesian priest.
Credit: Ann Jeriha

# God Wants You Here

My dear readers,

Have you ever felt an urge or a calling? Something you knew you were meant for or needed to do, yet deep down you still questioned it? As one of this year's jubilarians, Fr. Dave Sajdak, reflected, "Every single person has a vocation. God knows you're here, and He wants you here."

The thirteen Salesians featured in this latest issue of ***Don Bosco Insights*** followed their vocations to serve God through the Salesian religious life. Twelve priests and one brother answered the Lord's call and dedicated their lives to the mission of St. John Bosco. This year, they celebrate significant anniversaries of profession and ordination, milestones that bear witness to decades of faithful service, sacrifice, and joy.

Among this year's jubilarians, one beloved Salesian is celebrating seventy years of priesthood. Three are marking sixty years of religious profession, while another celebrates sixty years of priestly ordination. Two priests and one brother commemorate fifty years of profession, and four Salesian priests celebrate their fiftieth anniversary of ordination. Rounding out this year's group are two Salesians celebrating forty years of profession and one priest marking forty years of ordination.



Even more remarkable, two of this year's jubilarians are double celebrants, marking both sixty years of profession and fifty years of ordination.

You may recognize some names and faces from last year's issue. In fact, four of the thirteen Salesians featured here were also jubilarians in 2025, a reminder that the milestones of religious profession and priestly ordination often fall in different years and provide multiple opportunities to celebrate a lifetime of commitment to God and His people.

As you read their stories, you will discover a common thread running through each vocation: a willingness to trust God's call, even when the path ahead was uncertain. Their journeys have taken them to classrooms and parishes, missions and youth centers, communities near and far. Through changing times and varied ministries, they have remained faithful to the Salesian charism of bringing Christ to the young, especially those most in need.

We invite you to join us in thanking God for these dedicated Salesians. May their witness inspire each of us to listen more attentively to God's voice and to respond generously to the vocation He has placed before us.

God bless you.

In Mary Help of Christians,

Fr. Franco Pinto, SDB
Vice Provincial

Frs. Dave Sajdak and Tim Ploch, SDBs
Credit: Vicky Weekley, Province Associate Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry




Fr. Richard Authier, SDB
Credit: Don Bosco YLC

# Fr. Richard Authier

By Fr. Alain Léonard, SDB

Each of us has the joy of meeting significant people in our lives, and I consider myself privileged that the Lord placed Father Richard Authier in my path.

In September 1976, I started high school at the Salesian Seminary in Sherbrooke. At the age of twelve, I admired a newly ordained priest whose halo shone brightly! Father Richard Authier was a religious studies teacher, and he certainly stood out. His students loved Richard and never tired of teasing him because, despite his status as a priest, he still had his "baby face." He was jovial, a little cheeky, easily approachable, and always there for the young people. He resembled the famous Tintin from the comics. He inherited that nickname for a few years!

**1948**
Born in Montreal, Que.

**1966**
Made first profession at Newton, N.J.

**1976**
Ordained a priest at Sherbrooke, Que.

**1988**
Appointed provincial for Canada

**2006**
Again named provincial for Canada

When I was fifteen years old, I remained close to Father Richard, who remained involved with young people. He took on part of youth ministry while he continued to lead some religious education groups. He had a particular focus in this course: sex education. He would become a leading expert in this area, and in fact, he was in high demand to teach some classes on this subject to the Salesian novices!

To this day, Father Richard is creative and offers a variety of pastoral activities for young people to support their spiritual and Christian growth. He has established different groups for teenagers and alumni, organized Gospel Nights, Salesian Leadership Retreat (SLR) weekends with a Canadian twist, encouraged the creation of the Bosco Bicycle program, and considered purchasing a residence to provide vocational guidance for young adults.



Fr. Richard (back row, far right) and the Don Bosco YLC family in Montreal, Quebec
Credit: Don Bosco YLC

When I was twenty years old, my interest in Salesian life hastened a repositioning of the Salesian structure in Sherbrooke. Father Richard was an excellent spiritual guide for many former students, including me. He was appointed head of the new residence dedicated to Salesian Life Accompaniment. As I was considering the novitiate, Father Richard was appointed master of novices. Since he had had little preparation, at the end of my novitiate, he was sent to Berkeley for a year for further training. Upon his return, he was a bit more confident; his Tintin-like demeanor had faded. Eventually, it became clear that he was quite intelligent, and as Canada showed signs of growth with the addition of Mike Pace to the Sherbrooke novitiate, and then another young man, Father Martin McPake, regional councilor at the time, encouraged the establishment of a vice province in Canada. Because I spoke highly of Richard, he was appointed provincial! He held that position for fifteen years.

Father Richard was always held in high esteem by his confreres. He has made some bold decisions, not always pleasant at the time, but ultimately beneficial for the well-being of the Salesians under his guidance.

Richard is one of those men who has accomplished much good in the name of the Lord Jesus, enabling many to encounter Him and grow in faith. Over the years, he has also adapted to the realities of young people. To this day, he strives to understand them well and to share Jesus' message so that it has meaning in their daily lives.

Richard is now seventy-eight-years old and has directed the Don Bosco Youth Leadership Centre (Don Bosco YLC) in Montreal for twenty-five years, where his presence continues to amaze those around him. He retains the same simplicity he had fifty years ago when I first met him. Responsibilities have never gone to his head, and he remains very proud to be a Salesian serving young people. May the Lord grant Fr. Richard His blessing so that he may retain his vibrant spirit and eternal youth.




Fr. Dave Sajdak, SDB
Credit: Fr. Rich Alejunas, SDB

# Fr. Dave Sajdak

By Julia St. Clair, Province Communications Director

Growing up in Chicago, Fr. Dave Sajdak always knew the love and warmth of community. "My grandparents immigrated to the U.S. from Poland and settled in the South Side because their relatives worked in stockyards," Fr. Dave recalled. His parents raised him and his siblings (an older brother and two younger sisters) within a two-mile radius of their entire family. "We visited both sets of our grandparents every week!"

Fr. Dave went on to attend the University of Illinois in Chicago, where he studied finance, business, and accounting as a commuter student. He was on the path to accomplish his dream of becoming a millionaire. That's all he wanted: to become a millionaire.

However, one day he asked the "dangerous question." He asked in prayer: "Lord, do you have anything for me to do?" Fr. Dave reminisced. "The idea of priesthood came to mind."

**1955**
Born in Chicago, Ill.

**1979**
Made first profession at Newton, N.J.

**1986**
Ordained a priest in Chicago, Ill.

**2010**
On hand for the Don Bosco relic visit

**2021**
Joined the Chicago community

This shocked Fr. Dave. He already had a plan for his life, and it wasn't the priesthood. So, he asked God again — and the same idea returned. Then, one day, he walked into the university library and saw something that would change his life. He picked up a school newspaper.

"I saw an ad that said, 'Join the third largest family taking care of young people around the world. Join Salesians of Don Bosco, Priests and Brothers,'" he noted. "Before then, I didn't know who Don Bosco was. No one did when I was growing up."




Fr. Dave elevates the Eucharist during Mass.
Credit: Fr. Dave Sajdak, SDB

Yet Fr. Dave, who at the time worked part-time with the Chicago Park District as a recreation leader for young people, remained intrigued. Fr. Dave also was inspired by a young priest at his parish who helped him get involved with youth ministry. Fr. Dave said he enjoyed being with young people.

"I took the ad and made a deal with the Lord," he revealed. "I said, 'If I still have this idea in my head my senior year, after my first exams of the semester, I'll answer this ad asking for information. True to my promise, I sent it in. And now I've been forty years ordained and add another nine [years] of my being with the Salesians."

"When I got accepted to the seminary, I told the Lord, 'I'll give this one year, and then I'll go home,'" Fr. Dave said. Indeed, experiencing religious life was much different than what he had anticipated. "Religious life wasn't what I expected. There was no chanting in halls and all that," he specified. "I found out early on that Salesian religious life was very down-to-earth. I gave it a year, and, although there were times where I thought, 'I gotta get out of here,' still I applied myself to best do what I was asked to do. After all, I made a deal with the Lord."

"At the end of my Son of Mary year, I had a dilemma. I wanted to work at Camp Don Bosco, but I had to be accepted to the novitiate to do that. I was hoping not to be accepted! But I was. I was paired with Bro. Larry Gilmore. He was such a practical, down-to-earth guy. I learned a lot from him." I had a great summer. I still have my journal from that summer.

"When we first got to the novitiate, I walked outside one evening. Walked up to camp, and on the way back to the novitiate building, I asked God, 'Where do You want me? Where do I belong?'" I sensed the words 'You belong here.'"

If there's one thing Fr. Dave loves most about being a Salesian, it's being present with and accompanying young people. "I love having the opportunity to be with them," he beamed. "I want to work with young people and tell them about Jesus."





This desire to be with the young has helped Fr. Dave to enjoy in all his assignments. These include, but are not limited to, his having served at Archbishop Shaw High School in Marrero, La.; Mary Help of Christians School in Tampa, Fla.; and Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Surrey, B.C.

"I've learned a lot from every assignment I've had, and it made me mature in my religious life and spirituality," he described. "The Salesian life invited me into many places I wouldn't have normally gone. I've enjoyed all the places I've been. God's been good to me, people have been good to me, and I've grown from every place I've been."

Throughout his years of service, Fr. Dave has witnessed many beautiful moments in both Salesian and Church history. One of them was when the relic of Don Bosco went on tour.

**Top: Fr. Dave and some youths dress up at Holy Cross Church in Champaign, Ill., as the Blues Brothers.**
**Left: Fr. Dave makes his first profession in 1979.**
**Credit: Fr. Dave Sajdak, SDB**





"When I was in Surrey, the relic of Don Bosco arrived; we were its last stop," he began. "The crate it needed to be returned in got lost, and they had to build a new one. Due to this, the relic stayed in Surrey the longest. It was wonderful to see everyone's devotion and how all the people just wanted to touch the casket and pray."

Another moment Fr. Dave is grateful to have been a part of was the faith life of young college students at the Newman Center at the University of Illinois. "My greatest surprise was seeing the life of the Newman Center. And my experience of being pastor of Holy Cross Parish in Champaign, Ill., was truly a blessing for me."

Fr. Dave expressed his appreciation for being a part of Salesian summer camps and accompanying the young on World Youth Days and Salesian Leadership Retreats. "Those are really powerful memories that people hang onto," he added. "I've seen and been places and been involved in people's lives in ways I couldn't have imagined, and I've learned that Salesian priests and brothers are held in high regard everywhere I've been. It's really humbling, but a grace and blessing."

One part of his mission that Fr. Dave has missed as time has gone on is not being as physically active with the young as he once was. "There's a reason why many athletes retire by forty," he mused. "Not being totally active as I once was is a sting I've had to get used to. But I still feel blessed after all these years."

Twelve years ago, a special someone entered Fr. Dave's life who remains a beacon of love and joy and is instantly recognizable to this day. "For the past twelve years, I've had a pup: Angela," he beamed. "My sister gave her to me as a surprise because I babysat her two dogs while she was on vacation with her family. She still takes care of Angela's expenses."

Throughout the years, Angela has been a great prop to help Fr. Dave remain connected with young people. "Since I can't run around as much with the kids anymore, I bring Angela, and they come to us," he explained. "There are more people who know Angela's name than mine!"

**Left: Fr. Dave and Angela**
**Right: Fr. Dave and a lookalike**
**Credit: Fr. Dave Sajdak, SDB**





Now Fr. Dave celebrates not only his fortieth anniversary of priestly ordination, but also his fifth year of being back in Chicago, where he currently serves as the director of the Salesian community.

One thing Fr. Dave would like anyone discerning a call to religious life to keep in mind is that the formation process is a mutual thing between the men in formation and their superiors. "Remember, no one is going to force you to be a religious or a priest," he offered.

He also encourages everyone to remember that they have a vocation. God has something for every person to do. Fr. Dave challenges young people to ask the "dangerous question" — "Lord, what do You want me to do?"

Again, "Every single person has a vocation. God knows you're here, and He wants you here," Fr. Dave implored. "Ask the 'dangerous question.' Then, no matter where you are called in life, keep on applying yourself to the best of your abilities, and keep on being open to God's direction.

**Top: Fr. Dave and his parents on his ordination day**
**Left: Fr. Dave shakes the hand of a parishioner at a St. John Bosco-St. James Parish event.**
**Credit: Fr. Dave Sajdak, SDB**




**Bro. Alfred Flatoff, SDB**
**Credit: Bro. Alfred Flatoff, SDB**

# Bro. Alfred Flatoff

**By Bro. Alfred Flatoff and Fr. Mike Mendl, SDBs**

Brother Alfred Flatoff this year celebrates 50 years as a professed Salesian.

He was born on June 24, 1949, at Stevens Point, Wisc. His vocation journey began in his childhood. "In grade school, I had a desire to be a religious brother," Brother Al shared.

As he grew up, Alfred went on to attend Pacelli High School, which is run by the De La Salle Christian Brothers. It had a unique distinction. "My high school is the only school in the United States with a beatified brother," Brother Al explained. "Brother James Miller lived on a farm in the area and was at Pacelli for only one year before entering the formation program for the Christian Brothers. He was a few years ahead of me. Blessed Brother James Miller was martyred in Guatemala in 1982 and beatified in December 2019. "

**1949**
Born at Stevens Point, Wisc.

**1976**
Made first profession in Newton, N.J.

**1984**
Made perpetual profession

**1996**
Managed the Marian Shrine's bookstore

**2024**
Moved to the St. Philip Residence

Brother Al first learned of the Salesians in a ***Catholic Digest*** advertisement. "For some reason, it was the only religious order that appealed to me," he remarked. Brother Al entered the Salesians as a Son of Mary at Don Bosco College in Newton, N.J., in 1974. "An inspiration to me was a book I read by Venerable Father Edward Flanagan, who founded Boys Town in Nebraska," he added.

After a year of novitiate, also in Newton, he made his first profession there on September 1, 1976. "After I made my profession, I had no idea what would happen or the states I would eventually be in," Brother Al detailed. "Everything was up to God and the provincials." Before he made perpetual profession on August 26, 1984, in New Rochelle, Brother Al earned associate degrees in the arts from New Jersey's Thomas Edison College (now Thomas Edison State University) in 1978 and in business from the County College of Morris in 1980.





Bro. Alfred poses with the statue of Mary Help of Christians (left) and a puzzle he worked on (right) in Tampa.
Credit: Bro. Alfred Flatoff, SDB

Brother Al remained in Newton until 1979, fulfilling various general services. From 1979 to 1981 he served likewise at Don Bosco Tech in Paterson, N.J. He was posted to the Salesian Boys & Girls Club in Columbus from 1981 to 1986. From 1986 to 1991 he worked in the library of Don Bosco Tech in Boston. He came to New Rochelle in 1991, working at both Don Bosco Multimedia and as librarian at Salesian High School. He spent one year in Ipswich (1995-1996) as a groundskeeper (his term). In 1996 he began a ten-year assignment managing the bookstore at the Marian Shrine in Haverstraw, N.Y., which he looks back on fondly. "My best assignment was being the manager of the Marian Shrine's bookstore in Stony Point, N.Y., for ten years," Brother Al recalled.

In 2006 he moved briefly to Don Bosco Prep in Ramsey, N.J., as community treasurer. The next year, he moved to the Salesian Boys & Girls Club of East Boston as community treasurer, serving there until 2010. Then it was back to Ramsey for his longest assignment, fourteen years carrying out various responsibilities, including caring for the flower beds. "God has blessed me with good health and a variety of different assignments over the years," Brother Al beamed. "Planting flowering plants in Ramsey for many years was enjoyable. As a saying goes, 'Bloom where you are planted.' My plants were rooting for me!" After his time in Ramsey, Brother Al moved to the St. Philip Residence in Tampa, Fla., in 2024.

Both Brother Alfred's family members and his confreres find him quiet and mild-mannered, gentle of spirit, even when he may have strong opinions about something. He has an incredible knowledge of trivia and statistics that surpasses that of the average person.

He takes after his father with his love for flowers and gardening. He has a special place in his heart for animals and loves to pamper and buy treats for any cats and dogs in the Salesian communities.





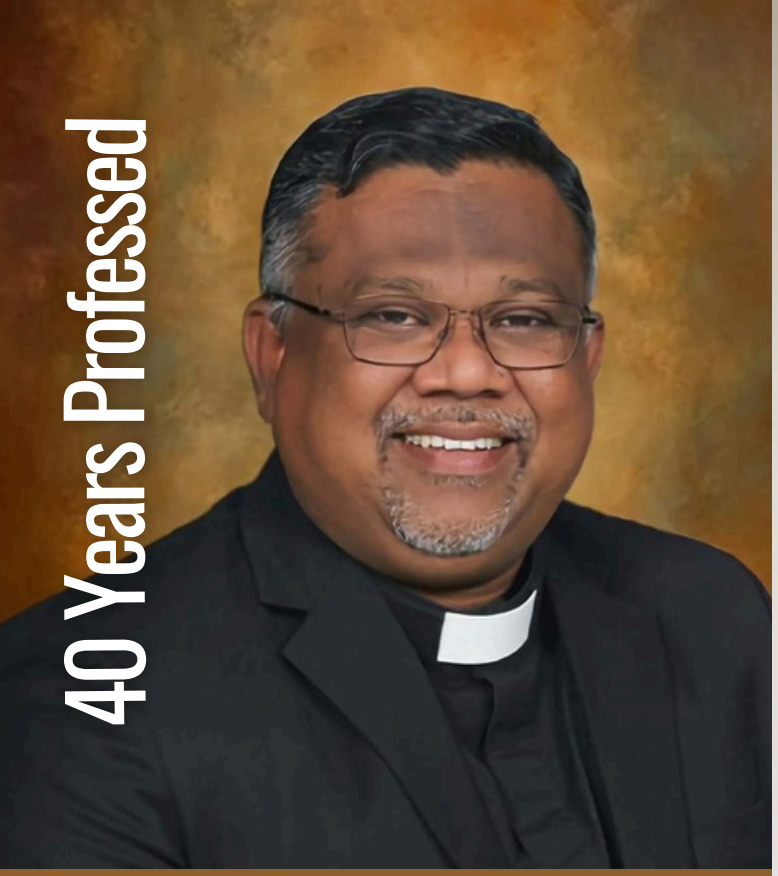

St. Francis de Sales had a saying: 'An action of small value performed with much love of God is far more excellent than one of a higher virtue done with less love of God,'" Brother Al explained. "I faithfully fulfill my responsibilities as simple as they are. One of my tasks in community is being attentive to the many little daily tasks that make community life run smoothly. Shutting off lights at night where they are not needed is also a very common one."

He is considerate and thoughtful, always remembering birthdays and anniversaries of special friends and relatives. His physical abilities are limited now, but he continues to help fellow Salesians who are disabled and need assistance. He takes pride in decorating rooms for the seasons, holidays, and birthdays. He seems to have an endless assortment of flowers, posters, table cloths, etc.

He has been a devoted brother to his sister Kathy, supporting her travels with prayers for her health and safety.

**Top: Administrator of the St. Philip's Residence Mary Sverko takes Bro. Alfred and Bro. Dave Iovacchini, SDBs, out for a drive.**
**Credit: Mary Sverko**
**Left: Bro. Alfred sets up the altar in the chapel at the St. Philip's Residence.**
**Credit: Bro. Alfred Flatoff, SDB**

40 Years Professed



Fr. Adaikala Raja John, SDB
Credit: Fr. Adaikala Raja John, SDB

# Fr. Adaikala Raja John

By Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB

Father Adaikala Raja John made his first profession as a Salesian forty years ago. Generally called "Father Raja," he is a member of the Salesian province of Chennai, formerly called Madras.

Father Raja was born in Palayamkottai in the state of Tamil Nadu, India, on April 9, 1968, and both baptized and confirmed in that city's cathedral. As a youngster he became an altar server, and already then he had a desire to become a priest. His parish subscribed to the ***Salesian Bulletin*** and circulated it among the altar servers; thus they learned about Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio, and their lives inspired the youngsters deeply.

**1968**
Born in Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu, India

**1986**
Made first profession at Vellakinar

**1997**
Ordained a priest in his home city

**2016**
Came to the SUE Province from the Chennai Province

One of his older brothers entered the Salesian minor seminary but struggled to make a change of language from Tamil to English. He switched to a diocesan seminary and became a secular priest. Raja, on the other hand, made a transition to English before high school and thus was ready to answer an invitation to enter the Salesian aspirantate. He speaks English and Tamil fluently.

Raja entered the novitiate at Vellakinar, Coimbatore, on May 24, 1985, and professed a year later. He made his perpetual profession on May 24, 1994, at Tirupattur.

Brother Raja earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy at the Salesian college in Yercaud, affiliated with the UPS, and studied theology at St. Paul's Seminary in Trichy. He was ordained in his home city on December 29, 1997.

Subsequently, Fr. Raja earned a doctorate in sociology from Gandhigram Rural University. His dissertation was titled "Rural Dalit Youth and their Perception of Mahatma Gandhi."



**Frs. Sagayaraj "Saga" Devadoss, John Louis Mariapragasam, Tim Zak, Raja, Balraj Chinnapparaj, and Sathiaseelan Kulandaisamy, SDBs, in Edmonton**
**Credit: Fr. Tim Zak, SDB**

Following ordination, Father Raja was assistant pastor at Mary Help of Christians Parish in Manakkal for one year, pastor of St. Xavier's Church in Dindigul for six years, vice rector of Kristodayam Theologate in Trichy for two years, pastor of Mary Help of Christians Church in Madhakottai for a year, assistant director of Don Bosco Youth Centre in Rijswijk, Netherlands, for two years, and director of Don Bosco Boys Home in Pondicherry for three years.

He came to Edmonton, Alta., in 2016 on loan from the Chennai Province to serve as pastor of St. John Bosco Parish, where he remained for nine years. In 2025 he was reassigned as pastor of St. Benedict Parish in Etobicoke; he explained to the Toronto chancery at that time, "I love to work in a parish together with youth work." In 2026 he also took on the role of director of the Salesian community of Etobicoke.

Father Raja sums up what he has learned during his Salesian life.

- "The friendship that we formed in the novitiate, where there were 45 of us as novices, continues today. These bonds have helped us to sustain our religious life and ministry over the years. We have stood by one another in good times and bad, and we have supported each other whenever we needed someone both personally and in our ministry.
- "The secular theology that we studied at the regional diocesan seminary has been a great help in our pastoral ministry. We became effective preachers in our local language. The social interactions we experienced there, the social analysis we learned, and the social teachings of the Church have all enriched our ministry among the poor and the abandoned, especially the youth of our nation.
- "In a poor, third-world country like India, where the gap between the rich and the poor widens year after year, I am convinced that it is only education that can truly transform society.
- "Earning the love and respect of poor youths can be difficult because of widespread prejudice and suspicion. But once you gain their trust, they are deeply loyal and self-giving. This is one of the most profound lessons I have learned in years of ministry with young people."




Fr. Bill Ferruzzi, SDB, celebrates the 60th anniversary of his profession last year. Credit: National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians

# Fr. Bill Ferruzzi

By Julia St. Clair, Province Communications Director

Fr. Bill Ferruzzi was "born in (but not quite) the shadow of Fenway Park," as he put it. The doctor who delivered him was his godmother's husband. Fr. Bill's parents raised him and his sister in Revere, "the Gateway to the North Shore," about ten miles north of Boston, Mass.

As he grew up and attended Revere public schools for eight years, Fr. Bill became fascinated with church — and the Church herself. "I recreated church in my bedroom," he shared. "The worst punishment I had was when Mom went, 'I'm going to take down your altar!'"

Indeed, his call to be a religious was "like a melody in the background." Whenever reminders and signs appeared, Fr. Bill would hear that melody and think, "Here's that song again."

**1947**
Born in Boston, Mass.

**1965**
Made first profession in Newton, N.J.

**1976**
Ordained a priest in Columbus, Ohio

**2021**
Joined the Stony Point community

The "song" revealed itself in small ways that increased as Fr. Bill grew into adolescence. "My [grade school] principal told Dad, 'Your son is either going to be a priest or a deep-sea diver.'" His classmates also knew of Fr. Bill's desire to be a priest. "They'd often ask me, 'Father, when are you going to do my wedding?'" he disclosed.

Fr. Bill's first major crossroad appeared as he discerned where to attend high school. He needed to choose between Catholic or public school and needed a push in the right direction. After he didn't get into his top school, Malden Catholic, he confided in his guidance counselor, who invited young Bill into his office. There he handed him a leaflet of St. Dominic Savio High School in East Boston, then newly opened — and the first work in the SUE Province named after St. Dominic Savio. "He encouraged me to take a shot," Fr. Bill conveyed.

Fr. Bill took the exam, was accepted into, and started at St. Dominic Savio High School. He thrived there and won the provincial catechism contest during his freshman year. To collect his prize, he needed to travel to the Salesian Provincial Center in New Rochelle, N.Y. "It was my first trip away from home," Fr. Bill began. "I got to New Rochelle in the rain with no one to pick me up at the train station. I took a taxi to the provincial house and wandered around the porch. Bros. John Zito,



Fr. Bill and Denise Dunn, coordinator, Salesian Cooperators (Eastern USA) during a Salesian Cooperators' event in Stony Point
Credit: National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians

Jerome Cincotta, and Alfred Rinaldi asked me what I was doing. And I became the guest of brothers—they made me their guest for dinner! I always remember the brothers who took me in." While in New Rochelle, Fr. Bill also met Fr. Joseph Stella, who'd later have a huge impact on his life when the elder Salesian became the director of East Boston the following year. Fr. Stella was known for having a gut instinct for vocations — and who had them.

"He'd constantly ask me, 'How'd you like to be a Salesian?' I blew [his questions] off till my silliness and luck ran out," Fr. Bill laughed. "Fr. Stella was relentless with me because he knew if I didn't get a good shove from behind, I'd hold out as long as I could."

First, Fr. Stella invited Fr. Bill to Thanksgiving dinner in Ipswich. "I thought my mother would never allow it, and that was my escape out," Fr. Bill divulged. "Mom said, 'If you want to [go], it's ok.' It became my decision, and I reluctantly agreed. So, I had Thanksgiving dinner with priests, brothers, and seminarians."

Although Fr. Bill had a great time, he still was on the fence. But Fr. Stella knew Fr. Bill had a religious calling — and he wouldn't let up.

"Fr. Stella pulled out an application for the seminary, called Mom, and said that I said I had a calling, though I didn't say that," Fr. Bill reminisced. "He talked to her to let me go to the seminary. The application sat on the table at home for six weeks. When I asked Dad why he didn't sign, he said it was because he wanted to make sure it was my choice first. After that, he signed, and, as they say, the rest is history."

In fall 1962, Fr. Bill transferred to Sacred Heart Seminary in Ipswich, Mass. He had a "beautiful experience" and, despite the tough environment (for example, there was no eating between meals), had a wonderful two years. He remained in awe of Fr. Stella, whom he described as being a "good vocation director, even though that wasn't his official title."



Fr. Pat Angelucci, Bishop Cooke, and Fr. Bill after the Mass for Fr. Pat and Fr. Bill's 50th anniversary of priestly ordination
Credit: Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB

"Fr. Stella knew when a person had a possible vocation, as well as when someone wouldn't make a good Salesian," Fr. Bill explained. "He reminded me that, to be a good Salesian, you need to have a spirit of sacrifice."

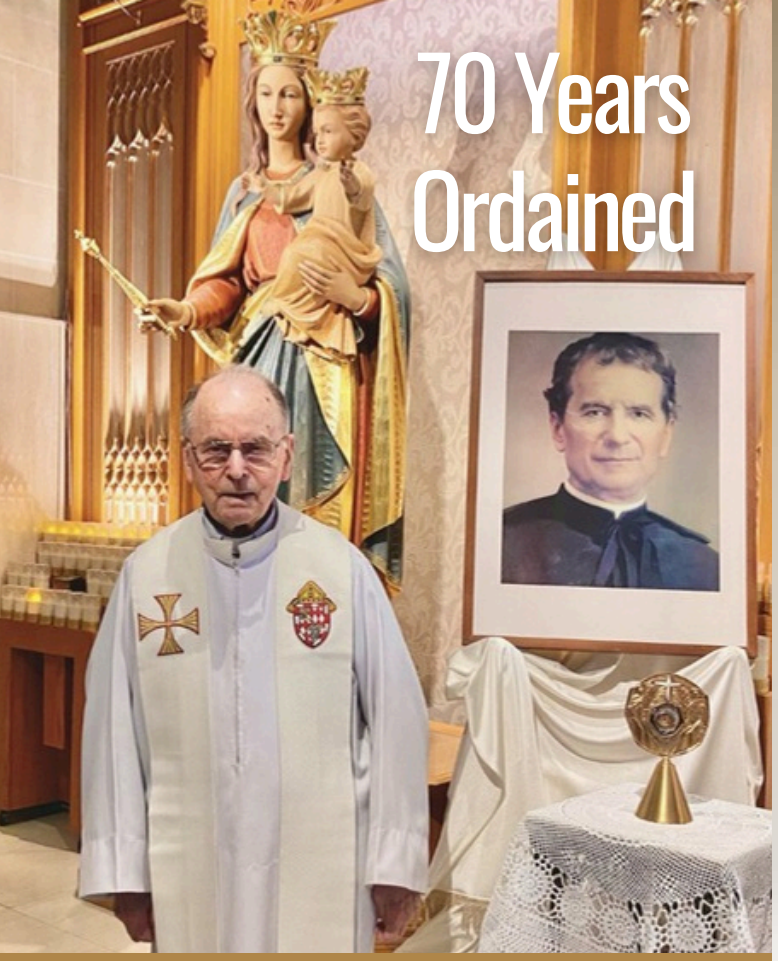
Since he made his first profession in 1965, Fr. Bill has had many assignments and favorite memories from every place where he's served. "One memory that sticks out was when I was the director of Columbus, Ohio, in the late 1990s and early 2000s," Fr. Bill exclaimed. "A lot of the kids [at the Salesian Boys and Girls Club] weren't Catholic, and, though we did not proselytize, we encouraged them (e.g., if someone was Baptist, we'd encourage them to be a good Baptist). When the National Evangelization Team (NET) came in, one kid said at the end he'd like to join the team, even though he wasn't Catholic."

"Although [the Columbus Salesian Boys and Girls Club] was the least Catholic club, it was the most religious one," he continued. "Some other kids expressed interest in becoming Catholic, even though they were so strong in their denomination. We didn't force religion or Catholicism on them, and they embraced them on their own. It was a wonderful thing."

Fr. Bill also recalled an encounter he had with an eight-to-nine-year-old girl during his twenty-fifth anniversary of priesthood during his time in Columbus. "She asked me, 'How long did you want to be a priest?' After I answered her, she said, 'You got what you wanted, didn't you?'" Fr. Bill smiled. "She's right — it wasn't about me. We're thanking God for the occasion, not me! Kids are honest, and she kept it real."

Another memory that touched Fr. Bill was when he returned to East Boston in 2006. "I met kids whose family names I recognized and went, 'Did your father go to school here?' They'd return the next day and say, 'My dad remembers you. You were his teacher!' What an amazing statement! The classroom is where we really impact the kids and have the chance to shape their lives. School is where it's at, and I'm happy I spent the majority of my time in schoolwork."

As Fr. Bill reflects back on the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination, he feels immensely grateful. "I look back and say, 'God has been good to me, a lot better than I deserved,'" Fr. Bill beamed. "I'm grateful, first of all, to almighty God. It's been a wonderful ride (or hike)."




Fr. Enzo Trigatti, SDB
Credit: Fr. John Puntino, SDB

# Fr. Enzo Trigatti

By Fr. John Puntino, SDB,
from Fr. Enzo's autobiographical notes

Nicknamed the "energizer bunny" because he "keeps going and going" at ninety-eight years old, Fr. Enzo ministers at St. Benedict Parish in Etobicoke, Ont., with weekly confessions, Italian Mass on Sundays, and communion calls to the shut-ins. He also assists with chores around the church and rectory daily.

Enzo Trigatti was born on February 24, 1928, in the village of Zompicchia di Codriopo, Friuli, in northeastern Italy.
He describes his family as simple and full of faith. The priests of the parish were "hearty and loving," his companions "good and without wickedness," which led to Enzo having an early desire to become a priest. However, with his father abroad for work and World War II on the horizon, seminary life seemed beyond reach. Then a Salesian Cooperator arranged for him to enter the Salesian minor seminary at Bagnolo (Cuneo).

**1928**
Born in Zompicchia di Codriopo

**1945**
Made first profession in Chieri, Italy

**1956**
Ordained a priest in Turin

**1996**
Came to the SUE Province

**2013**
Joined the Etobicoke community

Though he initially intended to become a diocesan priest, he quickly discovered his Salesian vocation from the Salesians' family atmosphere, goodness, knowledge of Don Bosco, and climate of piety. World War II caused the relocation of the minor seminary to Castelnuovo Don Bosco. From there, Enzo entered the Salesian novitiate at Villa Moglia, near Chieri.

Eighty-one years ago, on August 16, 1945, Bro. Enzo made his first profession at seventeen years old! After he undertook philosophy studies at Foglizzo, he did practical training at Castelnuovo Don Bosco and Colle Don Bosco, then theology studies at Bollengo.

On July 1, 1956, he was ordained a priest in the presence of his mother, who came from Canada, where the family had immigrated. His first Mass was at the altar of St. Dominic Savio in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians.





His assignments saw him offer his Salesian priestly ministry in the formation houses for Salesian brothers at Colle Don Bosco and Cumiana and in vocation ministry out of the Salesian centre in Ivrea.

In 1973, his life took a major change of direction as he took up responsibilities at the Salesian General Headquarters in Rome (*"la Pisana"*), where he worked in the general secretary's office. During his twenty-three years performing secretarial duties, he attended Lateran University and received the licentiate in pastoral theology. He was also instrumental in establishing a Saturday catechetical program for the children of families who belonged to the local parish located at the headquarters' chapel. These were years of hard work, but with the pleasure of seeing and hearing the Rector Major and many provincials and missionaries who came to meet the major superiors.

In 1996, then-Father, now Bishop Luc Van Looy, as vicar of the Rector Major and superior of the General Headquarters communities, told Fr. Enzo it was time for a change. Fr. Enzo showed holy indifference as he enumerated possible assignments where he thought he could be of service. And so he received the assignment to go to Maria Ausiliatrice Parish in Montréal, Que., to help with the Italian apostolate. While there, he began an afternoon Eucharistic adoration apostolate and acted as spiritual director to a charismatic prayer group.

As the SUE province was undergoing a round of restructuring, the Salesians withdrew from administering the parish in 2013. Consequently, Fr. Enzo came to St. Benedict Parish in Etobicoke (Toronto), Ont. He assisted Fr. Joseph Occhio in the Italian apostolate and assumed full responsibility after Fr. Occhio's death in December 2014.

Here Fr. Enzo Trigatti, "the holy energizer bunny," remains, highly regarded for his witness of prayer in the adoration chapel at various times throughout the day and greatly appreciated as he quietly goes about his apostolic and community responsibilities... "until the Lord will call me."

**Left: Fr Enzo at his 50th anniversary Mass**
**Right: Fr Enzo and his family in 1975**
**Credit: Fr. John Puntino, SDB**




Fr. Tim Ploch, SDB, in 2010
Credit: Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB

# Fr. Tim Ploch

By Fr. Tim Zak, SDB

Fr. Tim Ploch has given his own outstanding example of fidelity and service as a son of Don Bosco in the sixty-one years of his religious life and fifty years of his ordination, fulfilling numerous roles of leadership, including principal, pastor, director, provincial of both the SUE and SUO provinces, and general councilor for the Interamerica Region.

The most important aspect Fr. Tim felt he gained from a global perspective during his time as general councilor for the Interamerica Region was the ability to contact young people and help them all over the world. "It's not just 'us,'" he elaborated. "It's one thing to know that in your mind, but it's another thing we don't see upfront."

Throughout the years as a Salesian, Fr. Tim has been supported in his vocation and found inspiration in other Salesians. He recalled Fr. Bernard Justen, his first director when he entered the Don Bosco Juniorate in West Haverstraw (Stony Point) in 1960. Fr. Justen manifested Don Bosco's fatherliness and gentleness, concerned for each young person in the school.

**1946**
Born in Paterson, N.J.

**1976**
Ordained a priest in Columbus, Ohio

**1991**
Named provincial of the SUE Province

**2009**
Named provincial of the SUO Province

**2024**
Joined the Chicago community

Fr. Tim also remembered Bro. Robert Grant, who recognized his musical talent and pushed him to learn to play the organ. This made a big difference in Fr. Tim's life. While he was in Don Bosco College, Newton, N.J., Fr. Joseph Herzog, also a great musician, would be an inspiration. Fr. Herzog was one of the young people whom Bl. Titus Zeman helped escape Communist Slovakia to pursue his vocation as a Salesian, a life story of overcoming serious obstacles to become a man of faith and culture. Fr. Tim would be with Fr. Herzog again in Columbus, Ohio.




Fr. Joseph Tyminski followed Fr. Herzog as director while Fr. Tim was preparing for Salesian priesthood. Fr. Tyminski inspired Fr. Tim and the other students of theology with his deep love for the Church, for the liturgy, for Don Bosco and the Salesian charism. These same qualities later moved Fr. Tim to recommend Fr. Tyminski as a member of the provincial council when Fr. Tim became provincial of the SUE province.

Fr. Tim has been inspired by Fr. Dennis Donovan, an example of Salesian joy, a friend to confreres and many others, who faced illness with courage and faith. Similar qualities were found in Fr. Augustine Woon Taek Baek, who likewise inspired Fr. Tim, especially in the few years they were together in New Rochelle. Upon his return to New Rochelle after his service on the general council, Fr. Tim worked with Fr. Gus at Salesian Missions. Fr. Gus was open to God's will, leaving the Reborn Young Christ (RYC) Center after many years and beginning a new ministry at Salesian Missions. Fr. Tim witnessed in Fr. Gus a depth and balance of character, the capacity to adapt, a desire to help the poor in the Salesian missions throughout the world, a celebration of life and faith even to his untimely death. These Salesians, along with Fr. Gennaro Sesto, Fr. James Curran and many others, have been an inspiration to Fr. Tim in his vocation, even as Fr. Tim has been an inspiration, guide, friend and brother to many others.

There have been several significant, even life-changing, moments for Fr. Tim in these sixty-one years as a Salesian of Don Bosco. Among them, he counts the opportunity to attend General Chapter 22 in 1984. The five months of the Chapter, tasked with revising the Constitutions and Regulations, served almost as a second novitiate, inserting the Salesians into living the charismatic Rule of Life, not just following a collection of rules. It was a "gamechanger" for Fr. Tim, an experience and knowledge which he would share many times with confreres in workshops and as a formator.

While attending General Chapter 27 in 2014 as provincial of the SUO province, Fr. Tim was elected general councilor for the Interamerica Region. Working closely with Fr. Ángel Fernandez Artime, the tenth successor of Don Bosco, and the other members of the general council, Fr. Tim gained a global perspective of the Salesian spirit and mission. During the six years of extensive travel, countless meetings and reports, he witnessed the vibrancy and diversity of the charism, and he was able to help the Congregation live the Rule as a way that leads to love. In less dramatic ways, the opportunity to be an educator, to share a love for music and to accompany others to an encounter with Christ in the sacraments have also been significant.

**Chicago Salesian Family celebrate Fr. Tim's 50th anniversary of ordination at St. John Bosco-St. James Parish on Chicago's North Side. Credit: St. John Bosco-St. James Parish**



Fr. Tim finds hope in both the province and young people by being with youths. "[Finding hope is] just by being with [young people] in our works and presences," he explained. "They're positive, they give you hope."

Anchored in hope, still accompanying the young, Fr. Tim shares where he finds hope today. Despite a myriad of challenges in the world, such as poverty, climate change, migration, and unjust distribution of wealth, Fr. Tim feels the optimistic humanism of St. Francis de Sales (Const. 17), recognizing the good in others, the beauty of creation and the active presence of God in history. He finds hope in the Salesian Congregation, having seen so much good being done by SDBs and lay partners in the Interamerica Region and beyond.

As regional councilor, he has had firsthand knowledge of how Don Bosco's mission is alive and well in so many places. His work in the mission office further confirmed people's lively dedication of the mission of education and evangelization, in the missionary presences and with benefactors. Fr. Tim finds hope in the Province of St. Philip the Apostle. This time of change is being met with a willingness to relaunch the Salesian mission, young people are still attracted to the Salesian vocation, and the elder confreres give authentic witness of fidelity. The SDBs and collaborators are learning to respond to the challenges of the mission with renewed zeal and creativity, as Fr. Hugo Orozco proposed in his recent visitation.

As a true Salesian, Fr. Tim finds hope in young people. He recalls the significant presence of young people at General Chapter 28, when they asked the SDBs to return to their roots and be present to the young. Hope is evident in young people of the works of the province, for example, the dynamic group of young adults in Chicago, who desire to know Christ in the Scriptures, in the Eucharist, and in service. Hope can be found in our immigrant brothers and sisters, bravely fleeing from extreme poverty, violence, natural disasters, etc., to arrive in a new land, hoping to support their families and willing to contribute to society.

Pilgrims of hope with Fr. Tim Ploch, we congratulate him on fifty years of ordination. We also thank him for inspiring us, challenging us and helping us encounter Jesus, the reason for our hope (1 Pt. 3.15).

**Fr. Tim and St. John Bosco-St. James parishioner Maricela Salazar and Fr. Mirek Piepzcya, SDB (Polish ministry)**
**Credit: St. John Bosco-St. James Parish**




Fr. Pat Angelucci, SDB
Credit: Fr. Tim Zak, SDB

# Fr. Patrick Angelucci

By Michael McCarthy

Fr. Patrick is by far the best speaker I've ever heard, both in and outside of church.

Fr. Patrick is celebrating his fiftieth anniversary of ordination and his sixtieth anniversary of profession as a Salesian. These are very impressive numbers. It makes us wonder, "Where did all those years go?"

Our entire family has truly been blessed by being a part of the Salesian experience for the past sixty years. I've had the privilege of knowing Fr. Patrick for the past forty-seven-and-a-half years, which is a long enough period to see Fr. Patrick in just about every role imaginable. When I first met him, he was just a young priest in Boston. Within a year and a half, he became a young uncle to me when he married his niece Debra and me forty-five years ago this past December.

**1946**
Born in Bronx, N.Y.

**1966**
Made first profession at Newton, N.J.

**1976**
Ordained a priest in Columbus, Ohio

**1997**
Appointed provincial of the SUE Province

**2024**
Joined the Stony Point community

Since that very first meeting in Boston, Fr. Patrick has become a mentor of my faith and an extraordinary confidant in my life. I've witnessed his journey up close from a young ordained priest to becoming a Salesian provincial. Yet where I really got to see the man in a special light was when I retired in 2015 and my wife convinced me to go help "Uncle Patrick" in Port Chester for a "few weeks," when the Archdiocese of New York proposed merging four parishes into one. That was the second-best decision of my entire life. Of course, marrying his niece was my finest moment!





Father Patrick, in my humble opinion, performed a "miracle" in bringing those four diverse parishes from the brink of extinction to become an extremely successful parish now known as St. John Bosco Parish. It's a parish that I know will continue to grow and thrive forever, all because of his commitment. I just wish he had warned me that it was going to take a little more than a few weeks!

For the Angelucci family, it's not just about the years. It's more about the moments — and there have been thousands of them — but I was given only this article, so you really lucked out!

I think most importantly, Fr. Patrick didn't serve just the Church; he is by far his family's story, as he was his mom's only son and her brightest star!

As mentioned, he married my wife and me, which deserves some kind of special recognition for patience and courage. I know when Fr. Patrick and I first met in Boston, I don't believe we were on the same page. I was just twenty-seven during the iconic 70s. Rather than rushing into anything, I was just simply enjoying life. I came from a very big family of seven sisters and four brothers, where "chaos" reigned most of the time.

After Fr. Patrick and I shared a three-and-a-half-hour lunch, which focused on "relationships," primarily those of boys and girls, I think I got his message.

Fr. Pat can be very convincing, as most of you know already. He eventually baptized our three children — Michelle, Patrick, and Andrew — welcoming them into the Catholic faith from the very beginning. Many years later, he stood again with our family and married our daughter, Michelle, to her husband, Vincent. And then, continuing the tradition, he baptized their son, Luke, Fr. Patrick's great-great-nephew. Luke, of course, is the "Little Mayor of Rockleigh," who ran around during Fr. Pat and Fr. Bill [Ferruzzi]'s jubilee celebration in April, throwing rocks into the pool outside. Fr. Pat also married my wife's cousin, Donna, and her husband, Bill Dinnen. Bill has worked directly with the Salesian Province in New Rochelle for years. Fr. Pat then baptized their daughter, Gabriela. Having him as the presider for these special events has just made us all feel like the luckiest family in the world.

**Left: Fr. Pat and his mother**
**Right: Fr. Pat and his family at Christmas**
**Credit: Michael McCarthy**



And then there have been the harder moments of life, when our family gathered in grief. There was Fr. Patrick, who offered comfort, faith, and steady guidance as he presided over our family goodbyes. To be very honest, there is nothing like a Salesian send-off. Our family has been so honored over and over to have Fr. Patrick and his Salesian brothers be part of these tough family goodbyes.

I'm so grateful when I say Fr. Patrick has been there for everything, and I mean everything! The joyful beginnings, the milestones, and the difficult goodbyes. There are very few people in life who walk with you through all of that. Fr. Patrick is one of those rare individuals you will meet in life who you just know makes you a better person

As I begin to wind up my thoughts, I refer again to my earlier comments about having had the opportunity to work with him, when Fr. Pat was assigned as pastor at St. John Bosco in 2015. I got to see him in a whole different light — not just as "Fr. Pat" or "Uncle Pat," but as a true leader of people, who knew exactly what his goal was and how he planned to accomplish it.

What stood out to me the most over the nine years we worked together was his consistency. The same care he shows on the altar, he showed in the office. The same concern he had for a family in need, he had for the parish as a whole. He led with faith, yes, but also with humility, humor, and a genuine love for people. When waves of Covid-19 hit the parish staff hard, Fr. Patrick just kept going. At one point, he was the only priest still standing, even though he was probably just as sick as everyone else. I know how much losing Sr. Maruja and Fr. John [Grinsell] got to him, but it didn't slow him down. Even when we lost Fr. Tomasz [Grzegorzewski] and Fr. Tom [Provenzano] a couple of years later, he continued his mission to make the St. John Bosco Parish the best parish. And believe me, he did it!

If you know Father Pat, you know exactly what I mean. He has a special way of making people feel comfortable, welcomed, and valued. He doesn't just serve the community — he connects with it.

Over sixty years of profession and fifty years of Salesian priesthood, that kind of presence adds up. It's seen in the countless lives he's touched, especially in the young people, the families, and those who needed someone to simply be there. I'm sure Don Bosco, if he were here, would be so proud of Fr. Pat and all the wonderful things he has accomplished in the past sixty and fifty years.

**A young Fr. Pat (back row, second from right) and his family**
**Credit: Michael McCarthy**





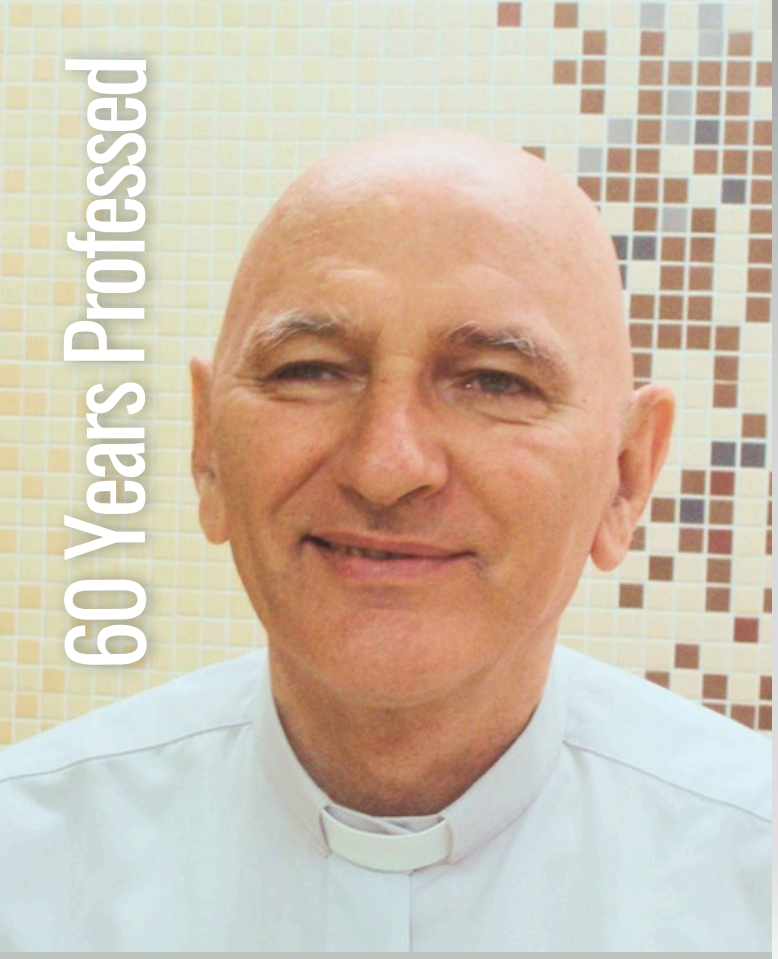
As for our family, when we think about Fr. Pat, we don't just think about everything he's done; we think about who he's been. A steady presence. A man of unbelievable faith. An extraordinary priest. And, for our family, someone who has walked with us through nearly every important moment of our lives, both good and bad.

Fr. Pat, on behalf of the entire family, and especially, all of those that we think about daily, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Thank you for your years of service, your guidance, your friendship, and your unwavering presence in our lives.

Congratulations on sixty years of profession and fifty years of Salesian priesthood. May God continue to bless you, Fr. Bill, and all your fellow jubilarians in the years ahead.

**Top: Fr. Pat (right) with his mom and Salesian schoolmates**
**Credit: Michael McCarthy**
**Left: Fr. Pat and a retreat participant during a retreat at the National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians**
**Credit: National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians**

60 Years Professed



Fr. Paul Dzaitkiewicz, SDB
Credit: Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB

# Fr. Paul Dzaitkiewicz

By Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB

Father Paul Dzaitkiewicz made his first profession as a Salesian sixty years ago.

Father Paul came to the New Rochelle Province in 2011 from the Wroclaw Province in Poland to serve as chaplain at St. Joseph Senior Residence in Woodbridge, N.J., a home for elderly Polish women and men. He began as an assistant to Father Jan Bernas and replaced him when he retired.

Father Paul was born in Wroclaw on Jan. 15, 1949, and made his prenovitiate at the St. Michael community in that city. He entered the novitiate at Kopiec in 1965 and professed there on Aug. 16, 1966. He made perpetual profession on July 14, 1974, at Marszalki. He also had military service in 1969-1971, reaching the rank of corporal.

**1949**
Born in Wroclaw, Poland

**1966**
Made first profession at Kopiec

**1977**
Ordained a priest in Krakow

**2011**
Came to the SUE Province from Poland

Brother Paul did practical training at Kopiec. He studied philosophy and theology at the Salesian seminary in Krakow and was ordained there on June 17, 1977.

After a few years of parish ministry in Przemysl and Czestochowa, he went to England to learn English so as to go to Zambia as a missionary. In the Zambia Province, he did parish ministry and was also rector at the parish in Chingola and the agricultural school in Lufubu. He served a couple of stints in parishes in Malawi, part of the Zambia Province, before dramatically changing the form of his ministry by moving to New Jersey.

At St. Joseph's Home, Father Paul is the spiritual leader of the sisters and residents. He usually celebrates two daily Masses in the facility as well a late afternoon adoration. He hears confessions as needed.





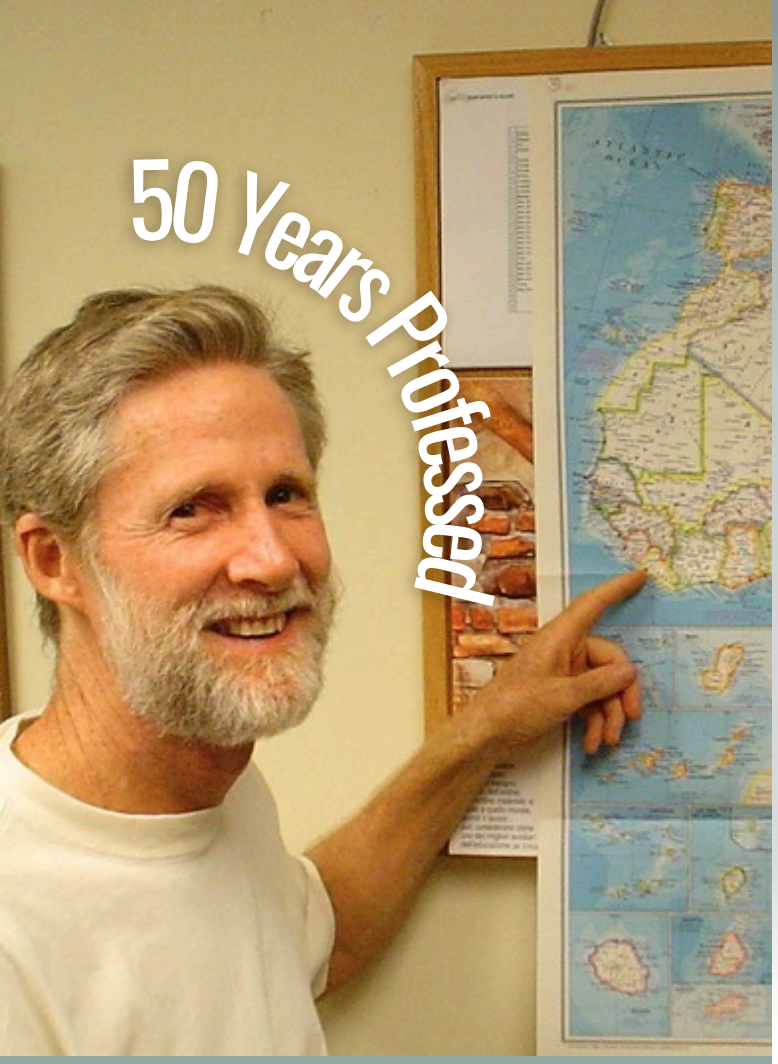


Nominally a member of the Salesian community in Orange, N.J., he faithfully keeps the director informed about the health of Father Bernas and Father Waclaw Swierzbiolek, also in residence there.

Father Paul loves his Polish heritage, and since St. Joseph's is predominately Polish-speaking, he is very happy. He possesses a great positive attitude and loves to talk to the Salesians about Zambia, vocations, and Salesian formation. He is extremely generous to the Orange community.

**Top: Fr. Paul during an interview with Misje Salezjanie (Salesian Missions). Credit: Misje Salezjanie**

**Left: Fr. Paul and sisters during "Vacation with God" in Pennsylvania Credit: www.dziennik.com**




Fr. Lawrence "Larry" Gilmore, SDB
Credit: Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB

# Fr. Lawrence Gilmore

By Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB

This year, Father Lawrence Gilmore celebrates fifty years of religious profession.

Father Larry was born on April 30, 1955, in Brighton, Mass. He attended Amesbury High School in Amesbury, Mass., graduating in 1972.

He began college at Lowell State College in Lowell, Mass., in 1972, then entered the Salesians at Don Bosco College in Newton, N.J., as a Son of Mary in 1974. He made his first profession on September 1, 1976, at Newton and his perpetual profession in 1982 at New Rochelle.

After earning his bachelor's degree at Don Bosco College in 1978, Brother Larry did practical training at Mary Help of Christians School in Tampa in 1978-1980. He taught science, English, religion, and phys ed.

**1955**
Born in Brighton, Mass.

**1976**
Made first profession at Newton, N.J.

**1984**
Ordained a priest in Columbus, Ohio

**1985**
Volunteered for the missions and went to Africa

He studied theology at the Josephinum in Worthington, Ohio, in 1980-1984. He earned a master of divinity degree there (1984) and was ordained on May 19, 1984.

Father Larry volunteered for the missions, and the Rector Major assigned him to Liberia, which was staffed by U.S. Salesians although attached to the British Province. After a year in Monrovia, he was posted to the mission in Tappita for ten years, until that mission was suspended (1985-1995), partly on account of civil war. He served another ten years at the parish and youth center in Monrovia (1995-2005), staying through the worst of the civil war's violence.



With the erection of the Anglophone West Africa Province, Father Larry relocated to Sierra Leone, serving mainly in Lungi (2005-2019), including six years as director, and then in Bo (2019-2025). He was always involved in parishes, sometimes also in youth center ministry. Last year Father Larry was assigned to the novitiate in Sunyani, Ghana.

One of Father Larry's West African confreres summarizes his life and mission: He "left a significant mark through his missionary work in West Africa, particularly in Lungi and Liberia."

That confrere offers details: "Father Larry's prayer life wasn't confined to a chapel; it was lived out in the dusty courtyards, classrooms, and streets of Lungi. Playing sports, teaching, and simply being present with young people was considered an extension of his liturgy.

"The Salesian motto is the driving force behind his mission. His spiritual focus in Lungi was heavily centered on evangelization, pastoral care, and the moral development of youth in a region facing immense social hardships."

A cornerstone of Father Larry's interior life is "a deep, trusting devotion to the Virgin Mary," this confrere has noticed.

He adds: "Father Larry's humility is evident in his willingness to meet people exactly where they are. In Lungi and later in Freetown, he did not rule from a rectory. He walked the dusty roads, sat in the markets, and knelt in the mud alongside the young. He understood that to win the trust of traumatized or impoverished young people, a priest must first lower himself.

"True missionary humility requires a willingness to become a student of the culture you are entering. Father Larry had to learn from the local Temne community in Lungi and the communities in Liberia. He adjusted his language, listened to the wisdom of local elders, and allowed his own worldview to be reshaped by the resilience of the West African people. Living in literal poverty forces a priest into a state of absolute spiritual vulnerability. When funds were low and resources for the youth centers or skills training programs were scarce, Father Larry's spiritual life was stripped of self-reliance. Every breakthrough—whether it was securing tuition for a needy student or keeping a local clinic running—was viewed not as a personal achievement, but as a direct gift from God. For Father Larry, poverty wasn't just about what he lacked; it was about what he freed himself up to give.

Fr. John Nazzaro and Fr. Larry
Credit: Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB



By detaching himself from personal comfort, wealth, and security, he was fully available to the street children, the displaced families, and the young people of the region."

This confrere concludes: "I am happy that I was with holy people like Father Larry. It was very good example for me."

That might explain why Father Larry is now attached to the novitiate, however much he would prefer to be among the young in a parish or youth center.

**Top: Fr. Larry in Tappita, Liberia, circa 1985**
**Left: Fr. Larry during his 1984 ordination**
**Credit: Salesian Provincial Archives**




Fr. George Hanna, SDB
Credit: Andrea Zimmerman, Salesian Family SDB Delegate, Salesian Cooperator

# Fr. George Hanna

By Jesse Hilario, Salesian Lay Missioner (SLM)

**Question:** As you celebrate 60 years of priesthood, what does consecrated life mean to you?

**Fr. George Hanna, SDB:** Consecrated life means everything to me. I've grown in my understanding of what consecrated life means and, as time goes by, trying to live that life faithfully. I think I understand it much more deeply now than I did at the beginning; something like this takes time to penetrate a thick head.

You learn to appreciate what consecrated life does for you. You grow in your understanding of community life and how to work together to bring about the good, especially for kids. As you do these things, you find it's just like performing the corporal works of mercy; you grow as a result of doing them. When you look at it from the perspective of 60 years of being a priest and 70 years as a Salesian, you could never in the beginning [or at first profession] understand the grace God gives you along the way, whether it's through adversity or the work that's placed before you. You grow, and then you learn to understand what it means to be someone who belongs to Christ as a consecrated religious.

**1933**
Born in Pawtucket, R.I.

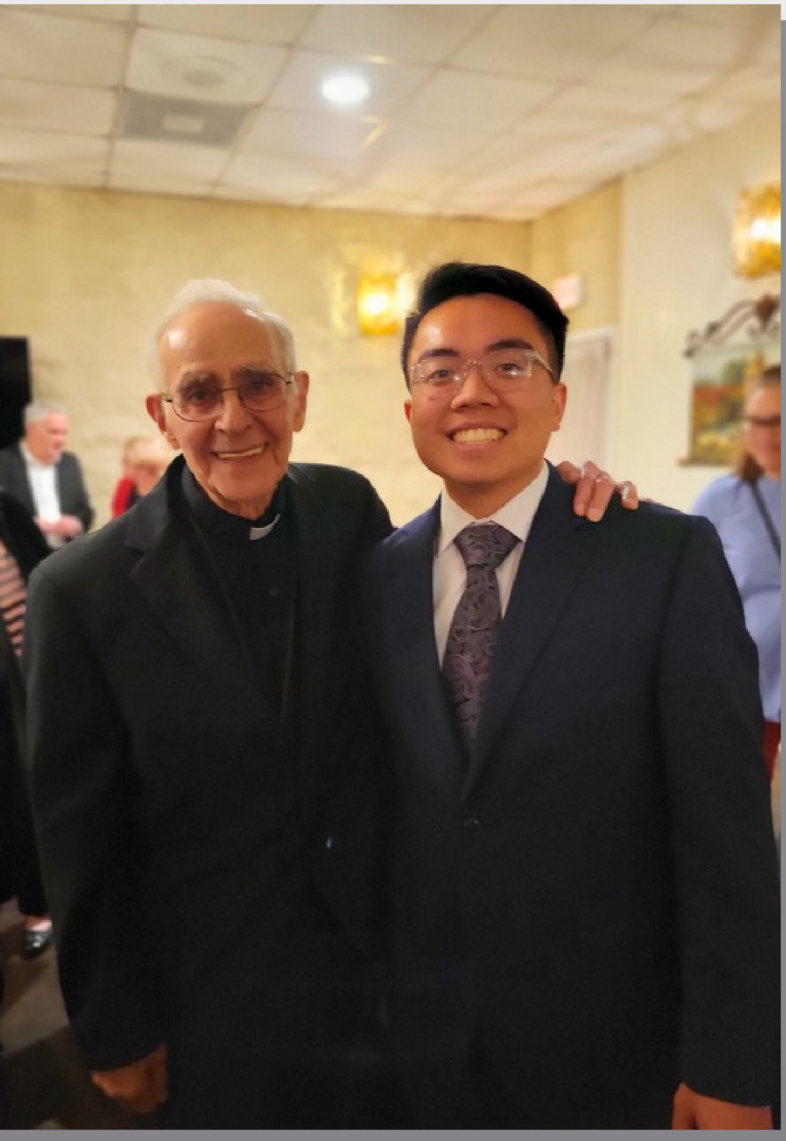
**1955**
Made first profession in Newton, N.J.

**1966**
Ordained a priest in Rome

**2014**
Joined the Marrero community

But that's a very gradual growth. And I have a great feeling of fulfillment. It is God who has called me to do this. I didn't choose it. It is He who wanted me to do the work I did over all those years. Helping people along the way has helped me grow. I understand now more about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. He says, "Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow in my footsteps." And now I know what it means. Sometimes you have no choice — you just have to keep going. You have to work under the worst circumstances and keep going until you finish. But at the end of the day, you think about it, and you say, "Yes, this is good — this is what I never realized I could do and be."





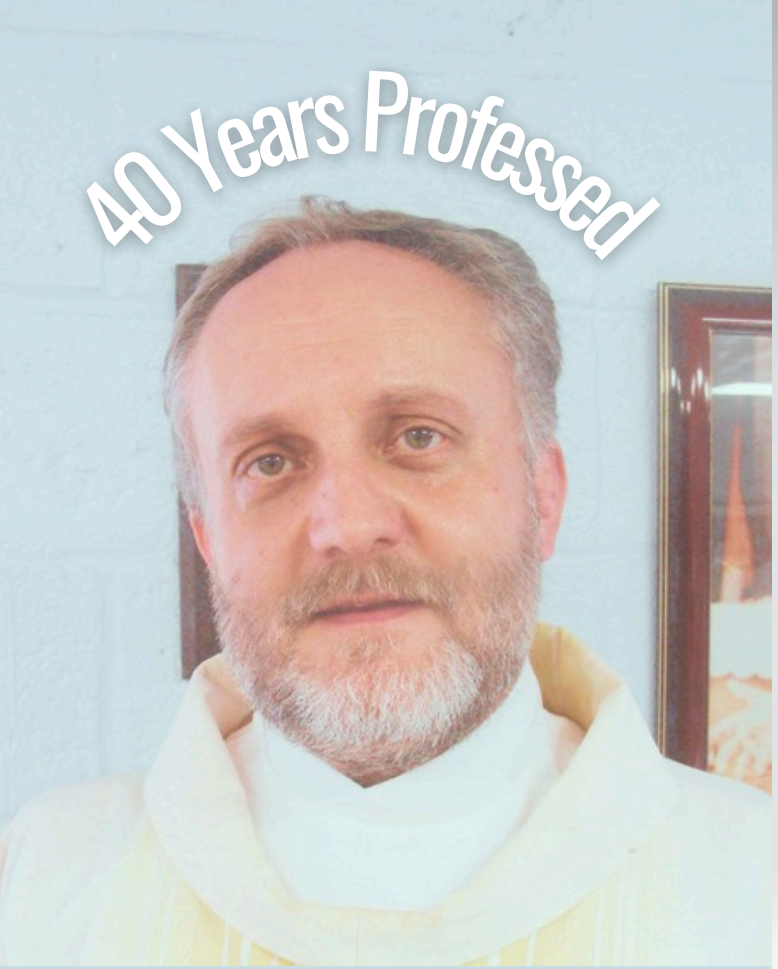
It's a gift. Consecrated life is a gift.

I was ordained in 1966. My vocation and my life as a Salesian are happy most of the time, not always. But the main thing is growing in knowing God and loving Him. You become a Salesian to become holy and to help kids become holy. You can't help them become holy unless you become holy yourself and have had an experience with God. Consecrated life has to be a relationship between you and God. I think that would characterize a Salesian: someone who has learned to have a relationship with God and continually grows — especially spiritually — under all circumstances, good and bad. It's a beautiful life.

For me, consecrated life is a gradual growth. It's a wonderful thing. I'm 92. I can honestly say: At my age, looking back and seeing where I was, God has done great things. It's not me, it's Him — I don't deserve anything. That's just the truth of it, you know. God is so good. That's my experience.

**Top: Sr. Rosa Hoang, FMA, of the San Antonio Province, Archbishop James F. Checchio, and Fr. George, after Archbishop Checchio celebrated a Mass for all the religious who celebrated an anniversary. Credit: Fr. Steve Ryan, SDB**
**Left: Fr. George and Jesse Hilario**
**Credit: Jesse Hilario**

40 Years Professed



Fr. Zbigniew Majcher, SDB
Credit: Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB

# Fr. Zbigniew Majcher

By Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB

Father Zbigniew Majcher, 60, this year celebrates his 40th anniversary of religious profession.

Father Majcher belongs to the Salesians' Krakow Province and has been on loan from that province since 2001 to serve as chaplain for the Little Servant Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in the Camden, N.J., diocese.

Father Majcher was born in Przemysl, Poland, made his novitiate in Kopiec, Poland, and made his first profession in Kopiec on August 22, 1986. As a young Salesian, Brother Majcher did his practical training as a missionary in Embu, Kenya. He studied theology in England but was ordained in Krakow in 1994 and earned an STD at the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Krakow in 1998.

**1966**
Born in Przemysl, Poland

**1986**
Made first profession in Kopiec

**1994**
Ordained a priest in Krakow

**2001**
Came to the SUE Province from Poland

Since ordination, he has taught English in the Salesian major seminary at Krakow and been a lecturer in the novitiate of the Salesian sisters. He has also been a parish priest in Oswiecim and Skawa. He is an author of many theological articles and an expert on Christology from an African perspective.

Fr. Majcher came to New Jersey to serve as chaplain of the Holy Trinity Province of the Little Servant Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. This post entailed different priestly duties not only in the provincial house of the sisters but also in the places where the sisters exercise their ministries. The Little Servants are a worldwide congregation of consecrated women founded in 1850 by Blessed Edmund Bojanowski, a remarkable lay apostle, who is a Polish counterpart of St. John Bosco. Through a quarter of a century, Fr. Majcher has served as chaplain of the Marian Residence assisted living home and helped in the St. Mary's Catholic Home in Cherry Hill, N.J., diocese of Camden. He has been the chaplain of St. John's Retreat House in Atlantic City, N.J.




Fr. Majcher has also been a lecturer in the novitiate of the sisters and spiritual director of many souls. In addition he helps in different parishes in the Camden, Trenton, and Metuchen dioceses and the archdiocese of Philadelphia, where he also serves as a retreat master.

He says, "Every vocation is an expression of God's trust in the one called. Salesian vocation has given meaning to my personal life. It helps me to cross the frontiers of different cultures and sustain my priestly identity."

**Fr. Zbigniew celebrates the St. Adalbert Polish Language School's final Mass of the school year at the Little Servant Sisters' Provincialate in Cherry Hill, NJ.**
**Credit: The Little Servant Sisters of the Immaculate Conception**

50 Years Professed




**Fr. Bill Bucciferro, SDB**
**Credit: Ann Jeriha**

# Fr. Bill Bucciferro

By Julia St. Clair

On April 2, 1842, St. Dominic Savio was born in Italy. Over a century later, on April 2, 1952, a future Salesian made his debut into the world thousands of miles away in Illinois: Fr. Bill Bucciferro.

"Lord, I don't know how I got here," Fr. Bill announced. "I'm just a kid from Joliet!"

Fr. Bill was raised in Joliet, Ill., with his two brothers, Frankie and Eugene, and his sister, Norma, by their parents. He was also enriched in his social and spiritual lives at the YMCA and his local parish. "I grew up at the YMCA and at St. Joseph's Catholic Church and was treated very well by the sisters and priests there," Fr. Bill stated. "I received recreation at the YMCA and spiritual development at St. Joseph's Church."

**1952**
Born in Joliet, Ill.

**1976**
Made first profession at Newton, N.J.

**1983**
Ordained a priest in Columbus, Ohio

**1998**
Assigned as director and first SDB pastor in Chicago

**2024**
Became director of the Port Chester community

As a child, little Billy watched Bishop Fulton Sheen on TV via the now-venerable show, ***Life Is Worth Living***. When Billy was ten, Eugene, who was fourteen years his senior, was ordained a diocesan priest.

"He had his cherubic face and looked like an altar boy coming down the aisle," Fr. Bill reminisced of his beloved brother, who was a priest in Joliet for forty-four years.

Little did Billy know he was about to begin his own formation journey in the coming years, starting when he read a book on the saints while he was in high school. "I was fascinated by St. Dominic Savio because we have the same birthday, but I couldn't find his autobiography."



Billy went on to attend George Williams College, which was close to his heart. "George Williams was the founder of the YMCA, and I thought I was called to be a YMCA director," he explained. "I was a camp counselor and instructor and spent time at the YMCA in my youth. Robert D'Young was my first hero and inspiration."

Billy had a goal: to finish his degree in social work and be a YMCA director. But something tugged at him.

"I felt there was something else I needed to do," he surmised. "I would go back to church after dates. That's how I knew I was called to something out of married life. I decided my last year of college."

Two months before graduation in 1974, Billy told his vocation director, who recommended he look for a religious order. "He sent me just a little slip of paper that was an ad for the Salesians of Don Bosco," he remembered.

Upon graduation, Billy received numerous job offers to be a YMCA director. Yet he turned them down to attend seminary. Then the ad he had received from his vocation director months earlier, to which he had responded, came roaring back. "I got the letter from the Salesians and saw Dominic Savio's name," he beamed. "I got excited; it was a good omen! By September 1974, I was in the seminary as a Son of Mary."

As he settled into his formation journey, Billy learned to overcome his scholastic challenges. "For me, the challenge was to be a good student, and I was with brilliant men who were talking about St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas," he remarked. "I knew I wanted to be a priest, but I didn't know what that meant. I'd say, 'Lord, this has to be You calling me to keep doing this because I wouldn't do this.'"

Throughout his formation journey, Billy received a lot of love and support. "I got a degree in philosophy in 1978 at Don Bosco College, and that's where I met Fr. Tom Gwozdz, who was one of the professors there," he mentioned. "During practical training at the seminary, I was an assistant director to the Sons of Mary, and that's how I met Fr. Dave Sajdak, who was one of the guys who came in." Along with having nurtured a lot of connections, Billy even met one of his childhood idols. "I met Bishop Sheen during the last year of seminary during the last year of his life," he proclaimed. "Bishop Sheen spent time with the seminarians in the sacristy at Newark Cathedral on Palm Sunday. My classmates (including Fr. Dennis Donovan and Fr. John Nazzaro) were brilliant guys; we all did it together!"

**Fr. Bill and his family**
**Credit: Ann Jeriha**






To this day, he remains grateful to his superiors, who helped him overcome his scholastic challenges. "My superiors, Fr. Klauder and Fr. Occhio, were great men and mentors. They helped me overcome my schoolwork and scholastic challenges."

Upon his ordination in 1983, Fr. Bill's first assignment was at Corpus Christi Church in Port Chester, N.Y., where he served until 1989. "I had a wonderful time during my six years at Corpus Christi," he noted. "My mentor was Fr. John Masiello, who was the pastor at that time. He treated me so well, as did Fr. Peter Granzotto and Fr. [Peter] Rinaldi. They were just wonderful."

Fr. Bill recalled another assignment, where he served as pastor and director in Chicago, Ill. "Fr. Pat Angelucci is such a beautiful man," he reflected. "He taught me a lot during his time as provincial (1997-2003) and had great confidence in me, more than I had in myself."

Fr. Pat gave Fr. Bill tremendous advice that helped him to flourish and thrive in his assignment. "Fr. Pat's motto — 'Keep your eyes on Jesus, and you're gonna be fine' — got me by for nine years in Chicago," he revealed. "It kept me grounded all the time. And that's what we do, as best we can, being close with the Lord and the Blessed Mother. It was the hands of the Blessed Mother who kept us in Chicago. She did it all."

Fr. Bill has witnessed miracles throughout his fifty-plus years in the Salesian life. One of these was when he had to build a youth center in Chicago. The diocese gave the Salesians $1 million, courtesy of an anonymous donor. "He didn't want recognition; he just wanted the youth center to be for kids," Fr. Bill detailed. The convent came down to build the youth center, and the foundation started to be built. However, it all stopped in the fall. "We had to get all these licenses and permits," Fr. Bill observed. "I went outside with holy water and blessed the foundation with it and said, 'Blessed Mother, please, we gotta be in for spring.' I said my prayers and went to bed. The next day, the plumber showed up, and more folks came by."

Another obstacle emerged in November. "We were told we needed a roof by December. I went back to the Blessed Mother, and we got blessed with a warm, crystal-clear November. They kept building," he beamed. "The new roof was installed on November 30. The next day, December 1, we got ten inches of snow. I went, 'Blessed Mother, thank you!' and the place opened up for spring."

**Left: Fr. Bill with his sister, Norma, and their mother**
**Right: Fr. Bill and family during Christmastime 2009**
**Credit: Ann Jeriha**





Today, Fr. Bill is back at his old stomping grounds in Port Chester, where he has served as the community's director since 2024 [Corpus Christi is now part of St. John Bosco Parish]. "I am very grateful for being back [in Port Chester] because these are great men that I live with [seven of them]," he smiled. "They are hardworking Salesians. I love being their director."

He remains in awe of the wonderful work happening at St. John Bosco Parish and beyond. "God has been good because I have great men around me, and the people around me are filled with faith," Fr. Bill explained. "We've got kids everywhere, which is what we're supposed to be doing. We have forty-five different groups in the parish and around 600 kids in the CCD program."

Fr. Bill misses his parents and brothers, who have passed away. However, he and Norma remain close to this day. "I miss them so much," he sighed. "They were great. Norma and I are still hanging around. She is the joy of my life."

**Top: Fr. Bill stands in front of St. John Bosco Church in Chicago, IL, now part of St. John Bosco-St. James Parish.**
**Left: Fr. Bill and his sister, Norma**
**Credit: Ann Jeriha**

Norma, who still lives in Illinois, came to visit Fr. Bill in Port Chester once years ago, but has yet to return. She is trying to come over for the official province celebration of Fr. Bill and his fellow 2026 jubilarians. Fr. Bill's nephew and niece are due to come.

In the past, Norma attended Fr. Bill's forty-fourth anniversary of priesthood in Chicago. Additionally, the beloved and late Fr. Steve Schenck surprised Fr. Bill when he brought Norma and Frankie over to celebrate Fr. Bill's twenty-fifth anniversary of ordination in Washington, D.C.

Fr. Bill's favorite things about being a Salesian priest are being with kids and living in community. "I love being with the kids and youths very much, and I love community," Fr. Bill responded. "I love just being a priest, knowing I'm available to celebrate the sacraments, including hearing confessions. I enjoy the sacraments, the kids, Salesian life, and community life."

He also loves saying Mass and is devoted to the Eucharist. "After all these years, I realize Mass is central, as is the Eucharist," he said. "I always had a devotion to the Eucharist."

When asked what advice he would give to anyone discerning to be a Salesian religious, Fr. Bill offered this: "Stay close to Jesus and Mary. Stay very close to them," he entreated. "And pray to the Holy Spirit. When I was discerning, my confessor told me, 'Pray to the Holy Spirit, Billy, and you'll know what to do next.'"



**Fr. Bill (center) celebrates Mass, which is concelebrated by (from left to right) Fr. Mike Conway, Fr. Greg Fishel, Fr. Rich Alejunas, and Fr. Kris Cepil, SDBs**
**Credit: Ann Jeriha**



Fr. Pat Angelucci, SDB, and his mom in front of a grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes
Credit: Michael McCarthy

# Complete Trust in God

Throughout their vocational journeys, each of our 2026 jubilarians encountered opportunities to initiate good processes and help them flourish. Whether it was Fr. Richard Authier's twenty-five years of leadership at the Don Bosco Youth Leadership Centre in Montreal, Fr. Dave Sajdak's guidance of the Surrey community during the extended visit of Don Bosco's relic, Bro. Alfred's faithful stewardship of the Marian Shrine bookstore, Fr. Tim Ploch's service as provincial of two North American provinces and later as general councilor for the Interamerica Region, Fr. Pat Angelucci's leadership in merging parishes to form St. John Bosco Parish in Port Chester, or Fr. Bill Bucciferro's reliance on Our Lady's intercession in establishing a youth center in Chicago, these Salesians — and so many others among this year's jubilarians — have embraced diversity, navigated change, and trusted God's providence every step of the way.

Their stories are not simply accounts of perseverance through life's peaks and valleys. They are testimonies to what can happen when a person places complete trust in God and responds to His call with a generous "fiat" — a wholehearted "yes." Through that trust, they have achieved far more than they might ever have imagined, touching countless lives and strengthening the Salesian mission in ways that will continue to bear fruit for generations.



As we celebrate our jubilarians, we pause to give thanks for their witness, their sacrifice, and their unwavering dedication to the young and the poor. Whether they mark forty, fifty, sixty, or even seventy years of religious profession or priestly ministry, each has offered his life in service of God's people. As St. Francis prayed, they have become instruments of God's peace — bringing hope where there was uncertainty, unity where there was division, and courage where there was fear.

Their example challenges each of us to live with the same spirit of loving-kindness, generosity, and faith. The impact of their ministry cannot be measured only by buildings constructed, programs established, or positions held, but by the countless hearts they have formed and the lives they have inspired.

Several of this year's jubilarians spoke with gratitude about the superiors, mentors, and confreres who accompanied them throughout their journeys. May future generations of Salesians one day speak with that same gratitude about the men we honor today. May the 2026 jubilarians be remembered not only for what they have accomplished, but for the example they have set, the faith they have modeled, and the encouragement they have offered to those who have followed after them.

Let us entrust our jubilarians — and all who continue the mission of Don Bosco — to the Lord with hearts full of gratitude. May the Salesian charism continue to inspire, nurture, and guide us, today and always, so that we too may answer God's call with courage, generosity, and joy.

God bless you,

Fr. Franco

**Fr. John Puntino (center) and Fr. Raja (right) with Salesian Cooperators (from left to right) Ivette Rivera, Kathy Hermanson, Ann Harding, Dolor Pigarowa, and Jina Abiad**
**Credit: Fr. John Puntino, SDB**












Credit: Vicky Weekley, Province Associate Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry; St. John Bosco-St. James Parish; Salesian Provincial Archives; Rosina Di Felice, Salesian Cooperator; and Salesian High School







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